1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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the *Sendhias* and the zamindars also denied it. The allegation possibly arises from the fact that the zamindar appoints or confirms the succession of the *Sendhia*, and may arbitrate in a case involving parties from the *patti* of two or more *Sendhias*. Moreover the zamindars themselves have probably often descended from the tribal headmen of old, and so it is easy for them to perform the function of ultimate arbitration in social matters which is so characteristic of the chiefs of the ancient semi-feudal organization of the province from whom they descend or derive. Obviously it would be easy to apply to all the Chanda Maria country the Bastar *panchayat* system.[1]

From Jarawandi our route took us six miles to Pendri, the largest village and virtual headquarters of Jharapapra zamindari, thence six miles to Jharapapra and back; on fifteen miles to Aundhi in Drug district, and thence seven miles to Murumgaon, the headquarters of the Chanda zamindari of that name; the last mile was at long last on made road, the third-class road running east from Garchiroli through Khutgaon, Dudhmala, Dhanora, Rangi, Murumgaon and Koracha zamindaris to Dondi-Lohara and Drug. We were, however, to have trouble on this road next day, when heavy rain flooded unbridged streams between Murumgaon and the twenty miles distant Manpur, the *de facto* headquarters of the Koracha zamindari of Drug. The very long delay in bridging this road and raising it in class is only too typical of the neglect by Government and District Councils of aboriginal areas.

Similarly the District Council had not opened a single school in Jharapapra zamindari. The late zamindar, a Halba by tribe, and amongst the most intelligent and progressive landholders of the two districts, had opened a private school at Pendri[2] which at the time of my visit was being run by a Gondi-speaking teacher of the Marar agricultural caste, and his pupils were six Marar, six Halba and two Pardhan boys. Marias and Halbas are the chief elements in the small population of the zamindari, dwindling steadily by the drift in recent years of Marias across into Bastar for the sake of *podu*.

All along this route there had been frequent pockets of Marar cultivators, especially near the streams. These industrious, progressive, dark-skinned agricultural pioneers have pushed up the valley of every substantial river in the backward areas of Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Drug, Raipur and doubtless other aboriginal districts of the Central Provinces. They have been the chief factor in such increase as there has been of permanent, especially irrigated, cultivation in these Garchiroli and Drug Partially Excluded Areas.

[1] See pp. 295-7.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. 3(5)22[2]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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I have written elsewhere[1] that the Garchiroli zamindaris afford a typical example of the neglect of aboriginal interests by the District Council; I might truthfully add by the Government also. So far my tour had taken me into Jharapapra and Murumgaon only of these estates; my departure from Murumgaon to Garchiroli was to take me in 37 miles through parts of Rangi, Dhanora, Dudhmala, and Khutgaon zamindaris: I visited Erka in Rangi, Dhanora, Dudhmala and Chatgaon in Khutgaon.[2] At Murumgaon I met almost all the zamindars. Over most of their estates there was no school, hospital or veterinary dispensary, practically no wells had been sunk, and visits of touring public health and veterinary assistants had been rare. The zamindars told me that a number of former schools had been closed on the plea of low attendance, the reason for which was that the children, who knew no language but Maria Gondi, were bored by lessons in the alien Marathi, while the teachers, knowing no Gondi and hating exile in these forest tracts, frequently went sick, generally in name, but often in fact. At Dhanora I found a small school that had just been re-started by the District Council after being closed for six months because no teacher could be found; at last a local untrained Depressed Classes youth had been appointed and had seventeen pupils, of whom five were Marias: it was a dull, ineffective institution. The zamindar of Potegaon said that though two or three years before Government had made a grant for starting an aboriginal school at Potegaon the District Council had provided no teacher; he was paying for one from his own pocket. I have mentioned the private school at Jharapapra which the zamindar himself finances.

High hopes were placed by the first Congress Ministry of the province in the *Vidya Mandir* Act, which provided for a new type of school in villages, intended to pay its way from the produce of lands attached to the school as endowments, and from the yarn to be spun by the pupils whose basic crafts were to be spinning and perhaps agriculture. I saw two of these, for which the zamindars had provided land, at Erka and Chatgaon. The attendance at both was very small, and they were in all ways utterly alien to the Maria way of life. Erka was typical. The *Vidya Mandir* fields were over a mile from the *Mandir*, which in outward appearance was indistinguishable from any ordinary plains village school, even down to the faded Congress flag on the roof. The masters of these institutions bear the time-honoured designation of *guru*. Here,

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 377-8.

[2] The map references on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Qr. Inch Sheet 64D, are Murumgaon MQ5461, Erka MQ4262, Dhanora MQ3652, Dudhmala MQ2849 and Chatgaon MQ2046.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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Scheme under which instruction in reading and writing Gondi and later Marathi and Urdu was to be provided for both children and adults. On my return to Marlavai we started work on a small scale with a school where adult Gonds were to be trained as teachers and village-officers. The work on this Scheme kept us in Marlavai until the end of January 1944, and it was there that most of the chapters contained in Book I were written. After an absence of five months in Assam, we returned in the rains for a short period and this gave me the opportunity of checking my Gondi texts with the help of the Headmaster of the Marlavai Training Centre Mr. S. B. Jogalkar and the Gond teachers, some of whom had meanwhile opened schools in their own villages.[1]

The division of the present work into two books was necessitated by its bulk and by the fact that a sudden opportunity for two expeditions into one of the least known tribal areas of the North-East Frontier prevented us from concentrating on the completion of the second part.

In the presentation of facts we have departed from the usual order of a straight monograph; instead of grouping them under such headings as material culture, agriculture, or religion, we have attempted an arrangement which, we hope, will give a better idea of Gond life as an organic entity. After the introductory chapters, which describe the physical and cultural environment, we have set a section outlining the mythical background of Gond culture and the cult of the clan-deities; for in this cult and the sacred myths lies the mainspring of the social order. Then follows a section describing the economic and ritual activities of a village community throughout the cycle of the year, and the three chapters of this section contain also most of the information on agriculture, the basis of Gond economics. Book II will open with an account of the phases of life, from childhood to death, and this will set the stage for a general discussion of the social organization and the principles of Gond religion, all details of ritual having been described already in their proper setting. The old feudal system looms still in the background of the social order, and I am attempting a reconstruction based on the existing remnants and local traditions contained mainly in the stories and songs of Pardhans. Read together with Wills' history of the Gond States of the Central Provinces this will perhaps give a certain idea of political and social life prevailing in Gondwana throughout the greater part of mediæval times.

The final chapters of the book will be concerned with the developments of the last fifty years, when increased contact with other populations broke up the Gonds' feudal organization and land-hungry immigrants drove many families from the lands where they had lived since the times of their ancestors. It is a dismal tale of the decline of a once proud and happy people, the loss of economic freedom, and the birth

[1] Cf. my article 'Aboriginal Education in Hyderabad.' *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. V, 1944.